



DURHAM JOHNSTON  
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL  
DARE TO BE WISE

# Access Arrangement Policy

**Last reviewed:**

June 2026

**Next review due by:**

December 2027





## Access Arrangements Policy

### Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to make sure all students have a fair chance in exams. It explains how the school supports students who may have difficulties, so they are not disadvantaged. The policy follows national rules, including the Equality Act, to ensure reasonable adjustments are made.

The information in this policy covers all students who might need support, from Year 7 to Sixth Form. It outlines who is responsible, how decisions are made, and when arrangements should be put in place. It also explains how evidence is gathered and what happens in cases such as medical needs or disagreements.

The policy includes examples of support available, such as extra time, a reader or scribe, rest breaks, or use of a laptop. It also covers other arrangements like separate rooms or modified papers. These examples help show how the school supports different student needs in exams.

<b>Approved by:</b>	Governors (Full Governing Body or Sub-committee) Leadership Group
<b>Related policies:</b>	SEN Policy Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Policy
<b>Staff with responsibility for this policy area</b>	Assistant Headteacher Inclusion Senior Leadership Team Examinations Officer

### Document Control

Date	Changes
April 2026	New JCQ rules published; link to updated rules
June 2026	Change of date for the final deadline for access arrangements to be requested for KS4 and KS5. Deleted student signed data protection notice



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## 1. Introduction

This document outlines the school's policy on Exam Access Arrangements. These are the arrangements put in place to ensure that all students are given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in examinations, without being disadvantaged by any learning, physical, sensory or psychological difficulty they may experience.

Access Arrangements are the principal way in which Awarding Bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act (2010) to make 'Reasonable Adjustments'. This requires that an Awarding Body makes reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School complies with the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document published March 2026, which can be found at the link below.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/03/JCQ-AARA-2025-March-26.pdf>

## 2. Examples of Access Arrangements:

Access Arrangement	Description
Reader (or Computer Reader as the technological equivalent)	A trained adult reads the question and any relevant text for the student (but not where the skill of reading is being assessed e.g. the reading section of the English papers).
Scribe (or Speech Recognition Technology, or Word Processor with the spell check on, as the technological equivalents)	A trained adult writes for the student. The student dictates their answers. The scribe writes <u>exactly</u> as the student dictates in MFL, the student must dictate spellings letter by letter in the relevant language.
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt the student with a few permitted phrases to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• refocus</li><li>• indicate how much time is left</li></ul>
Read Aloud or use of an Exam Reading Pen	When a student is reading a difficult text, he/she may work more effectively if he/she can hear him/herself read.



Separate Room within the centre	The student takes the examination in a separate room from the main exam room; this is in rare and exceptional circumstances only - see JCQ AARA
Modified Papers	Specially prepared papers, e.g. enlarged to a specific font size.
Extra Time	Students may be entitled to an allowance of up to 25%.  Extra time and between 26 and 50% may be granted in extraordinary circumstances.  In very exceptional circumstances, a student may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.
Live Speaker	A student with a hearing impairment may need a live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, e.g. MFL listening examinations.  The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD or tape in a Listening examination.
Language Modifier	An adult who has successfully completed accredited training may clarify the carrier language used in the examination paper when requested to do so by a student.  The Language Modifier must not explain technical or subject specific terms.
Supervised rest breaks	The SENCO must have considered the option of supervised rest breaks before making an application for 25% extra time. Rest breaks are not available for anxiety relating to exams.  Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time taken is added to the finish time.
Bilingual translation Dictionaries	For students who have English as an additional language, who have been in the UK for less than three years and were educated in a non-English speaking school prior to this:  A bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision is enclosed or written inside.  The dictionary may be used in some exams which are not assessing their understanding of English. This arrangement is not usually awarded for L3 qualification.



Bilingual translation Dictionaries with 25% extra time	25% time additional time may be awarded providing all conditions are met.
Alternative Site	The student will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a medical condition which prevents the student from taking examinations in the centre; or</li><li>• Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs</li></ul>
Practical Assistant	Help with practical tasks such as turning the pages in music or holding a ruler in maths.
White noise/ Listen to music	To enable a student to concentrate.
Laptop/Word Processor	Access to a laptop for an exam so that the student can word process their answers.  Spelling and grammar checks may be disabled or enabled according to student need.

### 3. Timeline for Awarding Access Arrangements

#### 3.1. Years 7-11

1. Year 6 – A student's primary school or parent informs the SENCO of any history of need or Access Arrangements implemented in KS2 examinations.
2. KS3 – Teachers monitor students closely and gather any evidence of need for Access Arrangements, passing it to the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator. Access Arrangements trialled in tests/exams.
3. Year 9 summer term – Part 1 of Form 8 is completed (for students with learning difficulties) based on the evidence supplied by teachers. A qualified Access Arrangements Assessor will then assess the student using standardised tests. SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator collates evidence of additional time being used in examinations during Year 10 before making an online application for indicated Access Arrangements and informs the Examinations Officer and parents.
4. Year 9 summer term – Part 1 of form 9 is completed using evidence from teachers and any relevant reports from external partners (for students with a substantial impairment such as a physical disability, sensory impairment or medical condition). Evidence must be provided by a suitably qualified professional e.g. a consultant, Speech and Language Therapist or CAMHS.
5. Year 10 – Access Arrangements are trialled as the student's usual way of working for the student. Teachers provide feedback to the SENCO/Access Arrangement coordinator



following mock exams (did students use the arrangements? Were the arrangements effective?)

6. July of Year 10 – Final deadline for teachers or students to submit evidence and requests for Access Arrangements. The autumn term mock examinations during Year 11 provide the last opportunity to trial Access Arrangements.
7. Summer of Year 11 – Examinations completed with Access Arrangements in place.
8. All access arrangement request must begin with supporting evidence of a student's usual way of working within the classroom; if there is no evidence, the application will be declined.

### **3.2. Years 12-13**

1. Students to declare any Access Arrangements they used during KS4 when they apply to Sixth Form or within the first half term. All requests for access arrangements must be made by October half term of Year 12.
2. For new students, the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator will write to feeder school for evidence of Access Arrangements at KS4.
3. Teachers monitor students closely during the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments, class work and feedback to the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator.
4. Considering evidence received from teachers, students and previous schools, the Access Arrangements Assessor carries out any testing necessary during the autumn and spring terms and the SENCO applies/reapplies for Access Arrangements.
5. Access Arrangements are trialled during the mock examinations during the spring and summer terms of Year 12. Teachers give feedback from the mocks to the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator (did students use the arrangements? Were the arrangements effective?). The mock examinations also provide a final chance to recognise any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty.
6. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator or Access Arrangements Assessor by April of Year 12. Occasionally students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, Year 12 exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.
7. Access arrangements are not awarded in Year 13 unless there is a rare and exceptional circumstances

### **4. Medical Letters and Private Assessments**

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but any request for an access arrangement also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school. Likewise, private assessments or reports from Educational Psychologists will only be accepted as evidence for an access arrangement if supported by school evidence. We may choose not to accept a private assessment report as evidence for an access arrangement if it conflicts with evidence gathered at school and by our Access Arrangements Assessor. It is important that school is informed of any



assessments taking place externally, so that collaboration can happen, following JCQ guidelines. If JCQ rules have not been followed by an external professional Durham Johnston will reject the findings of the report and a written rationale for rejecting this will be held on file and made available to parents. Durham Johnston has two internal access arrangement assessors and does not use any external professionals to complete this role.

## **5. Temporary Arrangements**

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Normally, students with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main exam rooms near the doors for easy access and exit. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks to stand and move around.

In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the school is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENCO/Access Arrangements Coordinator and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter will be required for the next session.

## **6. Evidence Held and Malpractice**

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The school is required to hold evidence in its files which can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the school will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, Form 9, letters from outside agencies and record of Access Arrangements used.

The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations. Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working
- Access Arrangements being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence

## **7. Disagreements**

If a student is unhappy with the process for access arrangements in the first instance the student or their parent should contact the SENCO to discuss their concerns. The SENCO will be able to discuss all documents relevant to the decision-making process. The school follows the rules set by JCQ and therefore decisions made are always in line with JCQ regulations. The final decision for access arrangements lies with the SENCO, as outlined by JCQ



If the student or family remain dissatisfied, then they should raise these concerns with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion/SENCO. However, the final decision lies with the SENCO as outlined by JCQ.

If a student or family remain dissatisfied, then they should raise these concerns with the Head teacher. However, the final decision lies with the SENCO as outline by the JCQ.